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The Walnut Street Prison: Pennsylvania's First Penitentiary

by
LeRoy B. DePuy

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THE WALNUT STREET PRISON: PENNSYLVANIA'S FIRST PENITENTIARY*

By LeRoy B. DePuy

THE MEDIEVAL fortress on Cherry Hill which is Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary and the Bastille-like Western State Penitentiary at Pittsburgh, each weathered by over a century, appear to moderns as primordial types of prison establishments. When first erected, however, these were advanced, even radical, institutions which had developed only after extensive experimentation at Pennsylvania's first State penitentiary, the Walnut Street Prison, for a half century a landmark alongside Independence Square. The parent institution, now forgotten except by a few specialists, played a most significant role, influencing both prison architecture and prison administration in Pennsylvania, in America, and in the world. It is perhaps significant that this first of all penitentiaries, an institution which in its own somewhat grisly fashion also brought relief to the oppressed, rubbed shoulders so intimately with the Hall made memorable by the conventions of the founding fathers. It is worth noting, too, that the life span of the Walnut Street Prison matches almost exactly that of Pennsylvania's first State constitution, in effect from 1790 to 1838. During a period marked by reforms, enlightened humanitarians in Philadelphia, chiefly Quakers, came to realize that cruelty of punishment was failing to deter from crime, and at very considerable sacrifice of their own convenience and comfort, initiated at the Walnut Street Prison a new and improved method for dealing with con-

*Mr. DePuy, a member of the staff of the Division of Public Records of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, originally prepared this historical sketch of the old Walnut Street Prison for publication in the Annual Report of the Philadelphia County Prison. We wish to thank Dr. F. S. Baldi, Superintendent of the Prison, for permitting simultaneous publication of this significant article. Mention should also be made of the fact that Mr. DePuy's work in the institutional records at Philadelphia was carried on under the direction of Mr. Henry Eddy, State Records Officer. It is part of his Division's program for uncovering and helping to preserve significant records at State institutions.

victed felons and started the development of what came to be known around the world as the "Pennsylvania System."

Built during the 1770's, as the Walnut Street Jail, Pennsylvania's first State prison was by no means Philadelphia's first house of detention, but it was from the start the largest and most commodious within the Commonwealth. While a number of the counties had jails, none were so spacious as that on Walnut Street. Actually there was no necessity for large county jails when fourteen crimes carried the death penalty upon conviction; enlarge the potter's field, but not the jail. Prior to 1790, the function of the jail was the detention of persons being held for trial and of others awaiting, more briefly, the carrying out of sentences already imposed. The price of conviction was not, as now, a prison term but rather the noose, the cropping knife, the branding iron or for lighter crimes, the pillory and the whipping post. The name of the "court of quarter sessions and jail delivery" was supremely descriptive, for the court met four times a year for the purpose of emptying the local jail of its unfortunate inmates. No county cared to bear the financial burden of prolonged incarcerations.

A significant chapter in Pennsylvania penology began with the acts of March 27, 1789 and April 5, 1790, in which the Commonwealth accepted partial responsibility for the support of convicted felons and removed control of the Walnut Street Jail from the local Sheriff. These acts transformed the Jail into Pennsylvania's first State prison and started it upon the road to becoming the first penitentiary. In new construction to be undertaken, it was specified that for part of the prison population there should be cells for separate and solitary confinement, something hitherto unknown anywhere, and thus began to develop the widely-known "Pennsylvania System."

The importance of the pioneering done at this Philadelphia prison has been repeatedly recognized by writers on penology. The best expression on this subject is found in *New Horizons in Criminology* by Barnes and Teeters:

> Few realize that America gave to the world the modern prison system. Fewer still know that it was chiefly the product of the humanity and ingenuity of the American Quakers. And this Quaker invention of the prison, or penitentiary, was . . . carried out in the Commonwealth

> of Pennsylvania, directed mainly from the city of Philadelphia. The first penitentiary was the Walnut Street Jail, originally built to serve as a jail but changed into a state prison for the reception of convicted felons in 1790.

Louis N. Robinson, former Chairman of the Pennsylvania Board of Parole and as well a member of the Federal Prison Industries Reorganization Administration, states bluntly in *Penology in the United States* that "prison reform in this country began in Philadelphia," while Rex Skidmore, recounting the story in his article "Penological Pioneering in the Walnut Street Jail, 1789-1799," which appeared in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* for July-August, 1948, expressed the opinion that:

> . . . This prison will continue to be regarded as one of the most famous in American penology—for it harbored numerous novel reforms and ideas. It formed the basis for the development of the Pennsylvania system of prison discipline and it cradled experimentation in penal practices which have played a significant role in the growth of modern penology.

During the early years of the Walnut Street Prison as a State institution, discipline appears to have been maintained in an effective manner. Prison industry was initiated and for some years was at least moderately successful. Provision was made to safeguard the health of the inmates, educational opportunities for prisoners were provided, and religious services were held regularly. The experiment in reform was successful, on the whole, for a period of ten or fifteen years, but gradually overcrowding brought serious difficulties, a decline set in, and during the 1820's the Walnut Street institution reverted to its old status, again becoming an ordinary jail.

The impetus of the reform movement was not lost, however, for the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, the Board of Inspectors, and certain enlightened individuals who had become interested in the cause had earlier petitioned the legislature for a state-wide system of prisons. An act dated March 3, 1818, called for the erection of the Western State Penitentiary at Allegheny, and another of March 20, 1821, provided for the Eastern prison. At these two larger institutions the "Penn-

sylvania System" pioneered at Walnut Street was to reach maturity. Particularly at the Eastern State Penitentiary, it enjoyed strong local support and attracted attention from many travellers. The new system flourished and stirred world-wide debate, for opinions differed sharply as to the wisdom and humanity of shutting prisoners in individual cells, subjecting them to labor in utter solitude. Charles Dickens, for one, attacked the System head-on after his visit of 1842, devoting to it a whole chapter in *American Notes.*

The movement for prison reform was somewhat older than even the Walnut Street Prison. A modification of the old and severe criminal code was projected by the Pennsylvania constitution of 1776 and effected by an act passed ten years later. This act of September 15, 1786, called for hard labor "publicly and disgracefully imposed" upon prisoners, which appears to have resulted chiefly in the pitiful sight of prisoners in "distinctive garb" working on the streets of Philadelphia. Such public display of social retribution produced little good excepting that it aroused the sympathy of kindly Quakers and helped lead to the formation, in 1787, of the enduringly influential Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, an organization which as the Pennsylvania Prison Society today continues its humanitarian activities. This Society, in turn, was responsible for the acts of 1789 and 1790, mentioned above, which brought about fundamental changes.

As has been noted, by the act of 1789 the Commonwealth accepted partial responsibility for the maintenance in close custody of convicted felons and changed the Walnut Street Jail from a city-county institution into a State prison, although the establishment continued to function also as the local jail. Eligible for transfer from the jails of other counties were such prisoners as had been sentenced to a year or more at hard labor, the county involved being required in the beginning to provide for the secure transfer of the convict to Walnut Street. Twelve inspectors conducted the affairs of the new State prison. Their duties included appointment of the Keeper, or warden, administration of prison industry, examination into the conduct of prison offenders, and supervision of necessary repairs and alterations to the plant. The costs of such alterations, of the salaries of officers, and of such materials as

would be required to provide prison labor were to be met by a tax levied by the officials of the city and county of Philadelphia, but the costs of maintaining convicts and, as well, any profits resulting from their labor were to be divided proportionately among the counties sending prisoners, including, of course, Philadelphia. As compensation for certain extra expenses which might devolve upon her, Philadelphia was to be allowed the sum of one hundred pounds annually.

The act of April 5, 1790, while chiefly a supplement to the act of 1789, contained additional features of importance. Notably it provided a "suitable number of cells to be constructed in the yard of the gaol" for the confinement of the "more hardened and attrocious offenders"; cells which mark the first step toward what was to become the widely-heralded "Pennsylvania System" of labor in solitary confinement. There was also an early and crude attempt at classification of prisoners in the requirement that certain portions of the prison be utilized for "persons convicted of capital crimes, vagrants and disorderly persons committed as such and persons charged with misdemeanors only." These persons were to be kept "separate and apart from each other, as much as the convenience of the building will admit," and female prisoners were to be quartered separately. One section of the establishment was to be reserved for "debtors and persons committed to secure their appearance as witnesses in criminal prosecutions and not charged with any misdemeanor or higher offense." After alterations which were to cost not more than sixty pounds, this latter section was to become known as "The Debtors' Apartment."

Under these early acts, general supervision at Walnut Street was the responsibility of the Board of Inspectors. As mentioned above, there were twelve inspectors, chosen by the mayor, the aldermen and the justices, six in May and six in November, for a term of one year. The Board was to meet at least quarterly, but to provide direct and continuous attention to the affairs there was a system of having constantly on call two "Acting Inspectors." Service as acting inspector rotated through the Board, each serving in turn, and those acting were required to visit the prison at least once each week to "examine into and inspect the management . . . and the conduct of the said keeper and his deputies so far as respects the said offenders employed at hard labor." This last limitation

appears to have been worded to set a distinction between those convicted felons who were prisoners of the State, and the county prisoners who were serving lighter sentences, the vagrants, disorderly persons, and erring apprentices for whom local authorities were still responsible.

With the provision of five hundred pounds to defray a "proportionable part of the expense of erecting such cells and walls," cells and walls immediately adjacent to but still distant from the older Jail, the Commonwealth launched upon a policy of State aid to prisons. The State shared responsibility even though the County of Philadelphia was to contribute up to one thousand pounds toward operating expenses while counties sending convicts to the new prison were required to make up any margin of loss which appeared between the earnings of a prisoner and the expense of his food and clothing.

Such, very briefly stated, were the administrative arrangements under which Pennsylvania's first State penitentiary operated from 1790 to 1835. During the latter year the Walnut Street Prison ceased to exist and the Moyamensing Prison began operation. With this there came a basic change, a shift back to the earlier status of a jail with local management and local responsibility only, but apparently officials in charge were unaware of any marked difference. The Minutes change abruptly in 1835, but the other series of old records continue without a break. Fortunately a very considerable bulk of the early records has been preserved with care and now rests in the record room of the Philadelphia County Prison at Reed Street. Inasmuch as Dr. Thorsten Sellin, until very recently a member of the Board of Inspectors, has written, in the April, 1941, issue of the *Prison Journal,* the story of the Philadelphia County Prison for the years following 1835, this present discussion confines itself to the pre-1835 era, drawing its substance chiefly from the old records of Walnut Street.

In its heyday the Walnut Street Prison was an active institution, and its records, now aged by a century and a half, present many vivid glimpses of social customs and conditions during the early days of our republic. Because of their location within prison walls with accessibility limited, these records have been infrequently used for research and have escaped notice by historians. For the period between 1790 and 1835 they reveal much as to life in the metropolis

of Philadelphia, then America's largest center of population and trade. Here can be found in stark brevity the story of the servant who stole his master's silver; of the "stubborn apprentice" of "high spirit" thrown in jail at the mere request of his master; of the seaman who jumped ship to escape his tyrannical captain; of runaway slaves and of free negroes entangled with the white man's law; and of the unfortunate prisoner in an inland county, who, being found guilty of a trifling offense, was assigned an over-long term so as to render him eligible for the Philadelphia prison where expense to his county would be reduced by state aid.

In sheer numbers the throng of human beings who as prisoners of the State or of the county passed in and out at Walnut Street is startling. The numbers increased steadily and rapidly through the forty-five year span. Roberts Vaux, in his *Notices,* lists the total number of convicts for the years 1787 to 1824 as 7,397 or a yearly average of nearly 200. The rate of increase makes this average deceptive; from 1806 on numbers grew steadily larger, and for the ten years 1815 to 1824 the average was 331 each year. Edward Livingston, in his *Letter . . . on the Advantages of the Pennsylvania System of Prison Discipline* addressed to Roberts Vaux in 1828, stated that "in Philadelphia . . . more than two thousand five hundred are annually committed [to prison]; of whom not one-fourth are found to be guilty." Of course Livingston was using gross figures, including witnesses and persons as yet unconvicted as well as county prisoners and prisoners of the State.

The dual function of the Walnut Street Prison, which was at one and the same period the jail for the City and County of Philadelphia and the State penitentiary, creates confusion, but ample evidence can be found to demonstrate that it functioned chiefly as a State institution. For example, on December 9, 1791, the report of the Board of Inspectors of the Prison was presented and read to the Assembly. This report was addressed not to Philadelphia officials but to the Governor of the State. From time to time there were visits by State officials. Governor Mifflin, in his message of December 22, 1791, which has been printed in *Pennsylvania Archives,* 4th Series, IV, 212-14, refers to his own recent visit in company with the judges. He approved the "order, the industry, and the cleanliness" of the section devoted to criminals, but was disappointed with the "extreme penury and wretchedness" of the

debtors' apartment. In the 9th Series of *Pennsylvania Archives*, I, 483, appears mention of a similar visit made November 24, 1792:

> Agreeably to appointment the Governor this day visited the Jail of the City and County of Philadelphia, and also the Debtors apartment in company with the Judges of the supreme Court, and the Attorney General.

Use of the term "state prisoner" appears as early as October 19, 1793, in the 9th Series of *Pennsylvania Archives,* I, 665, where mention is made of expenses incurred when a "State Prisoner" was brought from the Northampton County Jail to the jail of Luzerne County. Section 14 of an act passed September 23, 1791, provided that payment should be made from the State Treasury for the transfer of certain prisoners, and subsequently the journals of both the Senate and House show allowances made sheriffs for such transportation. For example, the *House Journal* for 1795-96, contains in the Register General's report, page 11, mention that the Sheriff of Lancaster County had been paid $93.51 for conveying five convicts to Philadelphia. The *Senate Journal* for 1820-21, in a table which follows page 816, lists the convicts sent from 1811 to 1820, county by county, and gives a total figure for expense of transportation of nearly $50,000. This would of necessity include the pay and transportation of guards. The number of counties forwarding convicts to Philadelphia during this period ranges from a low of 7 in 1815 to 26 (out of a total of 50 counties) in 1820. On the average 17 counties contributed felons to the Walnut Street Prison each year.

It was inevitable that there should be financial difficulties. Most remarkably, at the end of one year, as we learn from the message of Governor Mifflin dated March 16, 1797, and printed in *Pennsylvania Archives,* 4th Series, IV, 379, there appeared to be a surplus of $3,040.90, but this was far from typical. One year later, on April 25, 1798, the Minutes report that the institution owed $9,000 and needed "an immediate supply of $5,000." In part this abrupt fluctuation appears to have resulted from an inadequate system of bookkeeping, for the Minutes of February 23, 1796, confess to difficulty in ascertaining profit and loss from the various departments, that is from the different types of prison employment.

The mixture of county functions with State functions resulted

in friction over money matters, and the collection of sums owing from the counties became increasingly difficult. On September 8, 1800, the Inspectors

> *Resolved,* that the accounts of the respective Counties be stated, and where balances appear in favour of the Institution that the Keeper make immediate application for payment.

Since it was, after all, primarily a Philadelphia institution, the Walnut Street Prison was suspected in the hinterland of padding its bills to the counties. The other counties appear to have been willing enough to dump their felons at Walnut Street, but some counties, particularly those in the distant west, were indignant concerning the bills which came back. This feeling is well illustrated in the minutes of the special meeting of the Board held on February 18, 1808. The Minutes devote five pages to the report of the committee "on the Remonstrance from the Commissioners of Westmoreland County to the Legislature." These Commissioners from western Pennsylvania had charged, we learn, "that the produce of the Criminals' labour and payment of their Subsistence has of late become a matter of private gain and Emolument to Said Prison." The bill amounted to $1,200 for the six-year period 1801 to 1807, and cited with considerable detail the accounts for twelve prisoners. One month later, March 17, 1808, the Minutes report that "the different Counties . . . owe upwards of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars which will be collected . . ." The Minutes for January 16, 1809, show the Board ordering the Keeper to take special care with the accounts, and shortly thereafter an act of February 23, 1809, required the Inspectors to furnish county commissioners weekly expense accounts for the maintenance of their respective prisoners.

To a modern, it would seem that the outlying counties had little to complain about. The Minutes of April 18, 1808, state that subsistence for men convicts amounted to but sixteen cents per day. Dr. James Mease, prominently identified with the American Philosophical Society, in his interesting book *The Picture of Philadelphia,* published in 1811, mentions the daily boarding bill of sixteen cents and explains further that the "general cost of clothes for a year, is nineteen dollars thirty-three cents."

Study of the old minute books discloses much as to the methods employed and the problems encountered at Walnut Street. A regu-

lation of June 16, 1797, for example, called for a division of the prisoners into four classes:

1. "Sentenced to confinement only."
2. "Select class."
3. "Probationary class."
4. "Old offenders."

Clashes between the Board of Inspectors and the successive keepers were recurrent and tended to develop an occasional crisis. A notable exception came when Mary Weed succeeded her husband as Keeper in 1793. Her three years as Keeper were amazingly tranquil and successful. The handling of funds was one frequent source of criticism and inquiry. It is recorded on March 17, 1808, that as of the beginning of that year $3,295.79 had been in the hands of the Keeper, but on October 28 following, a change was ordered, a Treasurer appointed, and the Keeper ordered to turn over all funds of the Prison. The issue appears to have become hot, for the Minutes of November 25 state that the justices of the Supreme Court had been consulted and affirmed the imposition of the new requirement to be clearly within the power of the Inspectors. By February 3, 1812, another keeper was in financial difficulty, having turned over merely $100.38 to his successor, whereas it "ought to have been $1,288.37."

Then, as now, there were convict informers, or "rats." On April 13, 1812, it is recorded that "two Convicts of good deportment," had furnished

> correct information of a conspiracy to Commit extensive depredations upon the property of the Community with false Keys which has enabled the Inspectors to defeat the plans and to punish those concerned.

The two were pardoned under date of May 4

> . . . in order to save the said informers from personal danger, to reward them for the honesty display'd . . . and to encourage fidelity in other prisoners.

The maintenance of prison industry presented thorny problems from the early days. Dr. Benjamin Rush reports in his "Common-

place Book" that he visited the Prison on June 30, 1794, and was shown about by Caleb Lownes. He found

> The prisoners . . . all busy in working at 1. sawing marble, 2. grinding plaster of Paris, 3. weaving, 4. shoemaking, 5. tayloring, 6. spinning, 7. turning, 8. cutting or chipping logwood.

There was nail-making, also, but this arduous enterprise appears to have engendered sabotage. The Minutes for January 12, 1796, report unsatisfactory conditions in the nail department and show the establishment of regulations. Inmates were to be assigned a "reasonable" day's work; for one error breakfast was to be forfeited; for two errors breakfast and one other meal were to be omitted; further infractions were to be punished by solitary confinement. Very shortly afterward the Board bought out the contractor who operated the nail business and who reported his inability to profit from it. During this same year the Board, finding that the Jailer and his clerk were wasting time retailing prison-made articles, ordered that goods be sold only in specified minimum quantities. The Minutes of June 5, 1798, devote more than two pages to the report of the committee to "investigate the state of the Manufactories." This report shows the manufacture of nails and of shoes, weaving, and the sawing of stone and marble as the chief activities.

Six years after the authorization for the erection of the first cells for solitary confinement, there had come still further alteration and expansion of the plant. Under an act approved April 4, 1796, Caleb Lownes, John Connelly and Daniel Thomas were appointed "Commissioners to erect the New Buildings in the Prison Yard." By November 7, the $6,000 provided had been spent and on March 31, 1797, a supplementary act appropriated an additional $6,000. It would appear that these new buildings were to house the workshops.

Sabotage destroyed these. The Minutes report a special meeting of the Board of Inspectors on June 11, 1798, to ponder the circumstance that the buildings "erected for the accomodation of the manufactories" had been destroyed by fire. By July 27 they had found ample proof that seven prisoners had been responsible for the fire, and the sinful seven had been consigned to solitary. Funds

necessary for restoration were provided by an act approved April 8, 1799, but as late as April 6, 1801, the Board was still anticipating receipt of the last installment from this appropriation.

The attempt to enforce labor brought difficulties, and few prison activities operated at a profit. The Minutes of January 9, 1815, drip with discouragement. An unusually large committee, consisting of five inspectors, reported:

> . . . Many of the convicts and most of the Prisoners in the Wing are at this time Idle and your committee are of the opinion that . . . constant and suitable employment for the Prisoners is an object of the most important concern. . . . And to this fruitful source of mischief and insubordination it is our duty to look with unceasing watchfulness.

The report states that sawing stones, cordwaining, preparing furs for the use of hatters, the manufacture of brushes, and smithing were the chief industries. Shoe manufacture involved a large amount of capital and yielded no profit. For two years the brush shop had shown a loss. "Some modifications" were needed in the carpenter shop and in the smithy. Chipping logwood gained a slight profit, but only the pulling and cutting of furs was both "profitable and advantageous."

Clearly, then, by 1815 prison industry was breaking down at Walnut Street. Conditions were such that deterioration continued. An increasing prison population brought serious crowding, and the erection of another prison on Arch Street failed to bring relief, since the new building, opened in 1817, proved unsuitable for prisoners other than debtors and witnesses. An act approved February 24, 1823, brought what Harry Elmer Barnes has called "that final confession of both intellectual and industrial bankruptcy in penal administration—the treadmill."

One exciting feature of life at Walnut Street Prison was the occasional escape of an inmate from a building which appears to have possessed fundamental weakness in design. Both the convicts' hope and the keepers' dread cause these escapes and attempts at escape to bulk perhaps too prominently in the records. The banner day for such exercise came in the midsummer of 1800. "Escap^{d} 22^{d} July 1800," appears in red ink for eleven prisoners in the "Convicts Sentence Docket." On May 27, 1796, three female convicts made

off, but all were subsequently returned. One of them remained absent until September 1, however, and slipped out again on August 2 of the year following.

With overcrowding and the failure of the prison industries, internal disorder and escapes increased, inevitably. Dr. Barnes found evidence of serious riots in 1817, 1819, 1820 and 1821, and feels that the disturbance of 1820 "came dangerously close to resulting in the escape of the entire convict population." The Minutes for February 24, 1823, report a special meeting of the Board of Inspectors at which the Mayor and Sheriff were both present. That time they had to call out a detachment of Marines.

Prisoners lacking the cunning, courage, or agility essential for effecting an escape still hoped for freedom through executive clemency. The multiple and insistent requests for pardons, while less dramatic than escapes, could have been but slightly less irksome to the Inspectors, particularly in the early days when the two "Acting Inspectors" made the rounds and talked with the inmates at least weekly. Apparently the Board considered petitions for pardon monthly, and the frequency with which favorable recommendations were forwarded to the governor indicates a policy of rewarding good behavior by shortening the period of custody.

Considering the number, magnitude, and exasperating character of the tasks which devolved upon the Inspectors, with no remuneration provided, it would not have been too surprising had competent persons been unwilling to join the Board. The urge to serve the public interest, to lift the unfortunate, and to reform the sinner ran strongly in Quaker Philadelphia, however, and men notable in stature gave freely of their time and energy in the attempt to shape at the Walnut Street Prison a better system for the care of the convicted felons, their unfortunate fellowmen.

The sole literary Inspector, the only one of this era who published his views concerning the prison, was Caleb Lownes, an active member of the Pennsylvania Prison Society who was an Inspector from the beginning until November, 1799. He was an iron merchant whose activity in combatting the plague of yellow fever in 1793 makes him a hero in John H. Powell's recent *Bring Out Your Dead*. He was a dominant figure on the Board, and the publication of his *Account of the Present State of the Penal Laws of Pennsylvania Containing, also, an Account of the Gaol and Penitentiary*

House made him the most conspicuous of the early group. At the end of the decade he drops suddenly from sight, apparently with his term unfinished. Now and then for some years thereafter the Minutes refer to his debts to the Prison. Whether he suffered reverses in business; or, as appears likely, he became involved, as agent to dispose of prison-made goods, with the loss of prison funds we can but guess. Certainly he worked very hard for ten years to make the Walnut Street Prison a success.

Others of the early Inspectors deserve special mention. John Connelly served almost as conspicuously as did Lownes, and continued with the Board as late as 1810. The Minutes for January 8, 1799, report the resignation of Robert Wharton as Inspector "in consequence of his late appointment to the Mayoralty of this City." Other Inspectors politically active were Michael Leib, a member of the Assembly and one-time United States Senator; and William Linnard, a member of the State legislature. A number of men later conspicuous in the affairs of the Eastern State Penitentiary, concerned with its erection or with its management, served apprenticeships as Inspectors at Walnut Street. Prominent among these was John Bacon, for many years City Treasurer. In 1810 he became a member of the Board at Walnut Street, and later he served in the same capacity with the Eastern State Penitentiary from 1831 until his death in 1859. Others were Thomas Bradford, Jr., Philadelphia attorney, Matthew L. Bevan, merchant, Thomas Sparks, George N. Baker, and Samuel R. Wood, later prominent as the first warden at Cherry Hill. Nearly every one of these men was a Quaker and, as well, a member of the Pennsylvania Prison Society. They served well their Commonwealth and humanity.

As Negley K. Teeters has demonstrated in his *They Were in Prison,* the Pennsylvania Prison Society was a mighty force for reform. The conversion of the Walnut Street Jail to a State prison and the development at Philadelphia of the "Pennsylvania System" of prison management came directly from this group. At Walnut Street, from its initial years of success through to its ultimate failure, the members of this Society labored patiently, learned practical lessons, and developed their philosophy of penology. Realizing the inadequacy of the old Prison, they agitated for newer and better State prisons with the result that two were authorized: Western State Penitentiary, in 1818, and Eastern State Penitentiary, in

1821. Gradually, as the buildings on Cherry Hill reached completion, State prisoners came to be kept there until by 1835 none of these remained at the old Prison. The Moyamensing Prison was being erected during this same period, and in 1835 took over as the local jail. The building on Walnut Street which for so long had stared across at Independence Hall was sold, later to be destroyed.

Thus passed from the Philadelphia scene the physical abode of the first penitentiary of Pennsylvania and of America, perhaps of the world, but its spirit of reform lived on at the new Eastern State Penitentiary. There the plan of individual cells pioneered at Walnut Street developed into somewhat larger cells in which convicted felons lived and labored in solitude under the mature "Pennsylvania System," a system which came to be known and debated about the world. The prison on Cherry Hill, profiting from lessons learned at Walnut Street, set a new pattern in prison architecture and made its architect, John Haviland, famous. The prominent first Warden at Cherry Hill, Samuel R. Wood, and many of his early Inspectors, had long served on the Board at Walnut Street. It can be said with much truth that for more than a generation Pennsylvania led the world in prison reform and that the Eastern State Penitentiary was for years the world's most famous prison, but all the roots of that success fed at the now-forgotten prison which itself ended in dismal failure, but which succeeded in passing on to its better planned and more vigorous successor the splendid fire of its reform spirit.

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